REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the Office Action dated January 27, 2009.

Claims 19-37 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-18 have been canceled.

Claims 19-37 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugiyama (US 2002/0071027) in view of Firestone (US 6,963,353).

In support of the rejection, the Examiner stated that Sugiyama discloses all the features of the claims 19-37 except that it does not specify a memory unit for holding an image from a terminal. Firestone was accordingly cited as teaching the desirability of copying video data stored in a buffer so that when a speaker is detected, video of the speaking participant can be distributed without latency.

In response thereto it is submitted that there is a fundamental feature of the present claims and specifically independent claim 19, not present in either of the cited references. It is:

> "...an image processing unit for decoding an image of a speaker and for re-encoding the so decoded image providing an intra frame, when the speaker is detected at speaker switching;
>
> said image processing unit configured to transmit the intra frame as an image frame at the time of speaker switching, when said medium processing unit detects a speaker..."

Claim 19 has been amended to clarify (in conformity with other claims such as claim 37) that the decoding and re-encoding provides the intra frame which is transmitted upon speaker detection and switching. The Sugiyama reference discloses the configuration of a multipoint control unit for video meeting with the speaker terminal being detected by volume level of a plurality of terminals. When video data transmitted from the terminal is switched from one terminal to the speaker terminal, the timing of when an intra frame is transmitted is detected and the video data is switched at the pre-set timing. There is no decoding and re-encoding to provide an intra frame especially at the time of speaker detection and switching.

In contrast the presently claimed invention requires that the image data of the terminal (conference participants) is decoded, and when a speaker terminal is switched to the next speaker terminal, the image data of the terminal is also switched and the decoded image data of the terminal is re-encoded and transmitted as an intra frame with a different timing transmission. This is described at paragraphs 23 and 24 of the present specification.

Neither the Sugiyama nor Firestone references disclose, teach or even suggest the decoding and re-encoding to provide an intra frame at the time of speaker switching. The

Examiner has cited paragraphs 62-64 and 72-73 of Sugiyama with respect to video data selection block 11 as disclosing an image processing unit for decoding an image and for re-encoding the decoded image when the medium processing unit detects a speaker. However, Sugiyama does not provide an intra frame with speaker detection provided by the decoding and re-encoding.

The Firestone reference discloses the configuration of the multipoint control unit (MCU) for video conference with a video stream and an audio stream transmitted to an active speaker. These are not in synchronization with respect to a video and audio stream transmitted to a passive speaker. Accordingly low delay video and audio streams are transmitted to the active speaker and high delay video and audio streams are transmitted to the passive speaker by controlling buffers for the video and audio streams. In the presently claimed invention the image data of the terminal is decoded and when a speaker treminal is switched to the next speaker with the image data o f the terminal also being switched, the decoded image data of the terminal is re-encoded and transmitted as an intra frame.

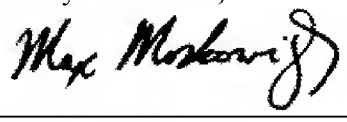
Neither Sugiyama nor Firestone disclose the claimed configuration for decoding and re-encoding with providing of an intra frame. Accordingly, the references do not disclose the presently claimed invention whether alone or in combination and the Examiner is requested to review and withdraw the rejection based thereon.

The Applicants respectfully submit that all of the presently pending claims are currently in a condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application, allow the claims as amended and pass this case to issue.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE EFS FILING SYSTEM ON MARCH 17, 2009

Respectfully submitted,



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